

FARMINGTON CITY
SPECIAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
October 12, 2017

REGULAR SESSION

***Present:** Chair Heather Barnum, Commissioners Roger Child, Connie Deianni, Kent Hinckley, Alex Leeman, and Rebecca Wayment, Community Development Director David Petersen, Associate City Planner Eric Anderson, and Recording Secretary Lara Johnson. Commissioner Bret Gallacher was excused.*

MISCELLANEOUS

Item #1. Farmington Rock Discussion

Eric Anderson said in Section 11-7-070 of the Ordinance, it lists the standards for construction of multi-family residential, commercial, commercial recreation or industrial conditional uses, or permitted uses on an undeveloped site. Within paragraph C-1, it states, "All commercial, commercial recreation and industrial developments shall be designed to include, as part of the exterior façade of buildings or as architectural elements in the landscape, an element of "Farmington Rock." He said a definition is not included for the term "element." **Heather Barnum** wondered if a previous Planning Commission amended the Ordinance to add in that Farmington Rock could be included as part of the landscape. **David Petersen** said he is unsure if that took place, as the Ordinance was written a long time ago.

Connie Deianni asked if this standard applies to multi-family residential. **David Petersen** said this sentence is listed under the standards of construction for multi-family residential and commercial; however, it does not list multi-family residential in the subsection. **Eric Anderson** also pointed out that it does not include institutional uses. He said an example is that the City Hall did not need to include Farmington Rock; however, it was included in the front planter boxes on the City's own accord. He said Commercial Recreation uses mostly applies to Lagoon; however, Lagoon does not usually include Farmington Rock in their designs. **Connie Deianni** asked if this standard applies to certain zones or for all of Farmington. **Eric Anderson** said Chapter 7 of the Ordinance applies to the entire city, unless otherwise specified. However, he said paragraph C does specify the inclusion of Farmington Rock to specific uses.

Alex Leeman asked for clarification that Farmington Rock is not required for uses like government buildings, schools, churches, etc. **Eric Anderson** said yes, Farmington Rock is not required for institutional buildings like Commission Leeman listed. He said some of those uses have included Farmington Rock, but that those uses have "sovereign status" so the City does not have authority to mandate the inclusion of Farmington Rock.

Eric Anderson reviewed the Farmington Rock Preference Survey and the results of the survey as completed by the Planning Commission, City Council, and the Historical Preservation Committee. He said based on the results, there is a slight preference for Farmington Rock. He explained the purpose of the survey was to find out the general feeling the governing bodies have with regards to Farmington Rock. **Eric Anderson** said based on the survey, the majority of the governing bodies were in favor of allowing the City more discretion to require Farmington Rock when it makes sense. Staff and the commissioners further discussed the results of the survey.

David Petersen showed an aerial view of the City and all buildings that have Farmington Rock on it or in the landscape within the City. He provided the Commission a table showing percentages of buildings with Farmington Rock and without Farmington Rock within different building type categories, including church buildings, schools, city buildings, other public buildings, medical/finance/office buildings, retail buildings, industrial buildings, and other buildings. He reviewed each category, and the percentages provided. He also provided a table listing the “hundred percenters” for non-residential and commercial buildings, which are buildings solely made from Farmington Rock.

David Petersen said the early City settlers used Farmington Rock in the beginning when most settlers were very poor. Once the settlers had enough money, they moved on to use other building materials besides Farmington Rock. He said in the 1950s and 1960s, many cities began putting metal over historical buildings in order to make the buildings look more like the big box retail stores. He said in the 1980s, cities began having the idea of creating themes, which is when Farmington Rock became required. He said he believes there is merit in leaving the standard as is, but writing in a caveat that acceptable alternatives to the standard must be approved by the Planning Commission. **David Petersen** said another benefit of leaving the standard, with a few amendments, is the City would get a lot higher quality masonry buildings. He pointed out that there is a compromise; however, because the design standards in Chapter 18 for the mixed-use zones are significantly different and Farmington Rock would look inappropriate on many of those buildings. He feels the Commission can find a good medium.

Alex Leeman expressed concern that if the standard for Farmington Rock remains, and a caveat is included that alternatives must be approved by the Planning Commission, it would come down to whether or not the Commission thinks the building is “pretty enough.” He said he thinks problems could arise if the Commission arbitrarily disagrees with the developers’ building plans. **David Petersen** said developers like flexibility within a standard, and they like to negotiate. He feels amending the current standard would achieve both of those things.

Connie Deianni said she feels it would be helpful to have a required percentage of Farmington Rock, otherwise, there is nothing stopping someone from not including it. **Roger Child** mentioned the cost of Farmington Rock is extremely high. He said even if the rock is free, the labor for the rock is where the high cost comes in. He said it is also important to define what Farmington Rock is because based on where the rock comes from, there can be different color hues to it.

Roger Child said it is his opinion that the requirement for Farmington Rock depends on the scale of the building. He said a large building may be required to have it; however, the size of the building would wash out the use of the rock, but would still cost the developer a lot to include it. He said in his mind, the historic rock buildings that bring charm to Farmington are because of the scale of the buildings. He said the historic rock buildings are small and quaint. He feels the use of Farmington Rock on a large commercial size building does not add any benefit to the City. **Roger Child** said he feels there would be a lot of conflict from developers if the City required Farmington Rock on commercial buildings around Park Lane. He said the office park, for example, will be catering to a high-tech job base that will want a sleek office building, and Farmington Rock would not fit. He feels it is important to require Farmington Rock in the right places within the City.

Alex Leeman said he feels Farmington Rock does not just dictate the look of the building, but it also dictates the color pattern of the building, as it was mentioned every rock has a different color hue depending on the location it comes from. He said an example of this was Wasatch Pediatrics. The proposed building at the time had a tan hue; adding Farmington Rock would not have matched their color pattern, which would have dictated the architectural style of the entire building. He feels requiring rock has the potential to change an entire building.

Heather Barnum said she is not overly concerned about requiring Farmington Rock since it does not fit with a lot of architectural styles, but she does want to preserve historic elements and materials. She feels an example of another historic material is brick; it is not extreme in style so it does not date like other styles and remains a classic look within a city. She said another example is Station Park; it is not extreme in colors or style, but has a classic look and feel to it. She expressed concern that a new office park could look overly high-tech and modern, which is a style the City has heard complaints on, particularly the new high school. She said she does not feel Farmington Rock should be required in all areas of the City, but she said she would be interested in requiring it in certain areas with the caveat that the Planning Commission would also review it. She said she trusts that future Planning Commission members will work to preserve the feeling that is being discussed.

Kent Hinckley said he feels there are a lot of cities with nice buildings; however, some cities have a unique look and feel than other cities. He said when he visited the east coast, Williamsburg looks and feels significantly different from the surrounding cities because they have maintained a different look and feel so much that the roads are even different. He feels the fact that Farmington Rock is hard to get or expensive to use has not stopped a lot of people at this point. He feels that if the City wants to be unique, it has to have some element to maintain the culture of it. He said he was leaning toward getting rid of the Farmington Rock prior to the survey staff conducted, but after he felt like he recognized that the Rock gives a certain look and feel to the City. He feels this may have been the governing bodies' original intent when they began requiring Farmington Rock in the 1980s. **Heather Barnum** pointed out that although it was a requirement, it has not been enforced over the years. **Kent Hinckley** said he feels if it remains in the Ordinance, it should be strictly enforced, or the requirement should be removed all together.

Alex Leeman said he feels it is too late to start strictly enforcing a rock requirement. He referenced Santa Fe, New Mexico; there are four colors that buildings can be painted. He said it has been that way since the beginning, and it has not altered. He feels Farmington is not at that point because there is no place within the City that has a style that is predominately Farmington Rock.

Rebecca Wayment said she feels cities were having this same discussion 100 years ago in that someone probably wanted to build something more modern but did not really fit the style of the city. She said she feels you can always start something new to move forward in making a change, even if the City cannot go backwards to change what has already been done. She said she feels the City can still create the look and feel it wants for Farmington to set it apart without it turning in to something like Layton or Centerville. She said she does not feel it has to be Farmington Rock.

Connie Deianni said she agrees on the desire to maintain the look and feel of Farmington, but expressed concerns on how to enforce it. She pointed to the fact that the standard already requires Farmington Rock, but it is unclear if anyone is even enforcing the requirement at this point. **Rebecca Wayment** said when the Parrish Lane corridor in Centerville was being planned, the Centerville Planning Commission had a design standard that developers had to meet. She said developers brought in color scheme, design plans, building materials, and more. She said it was very subjective on whether the Commission liked the plans or not. **Eric Anderson** said it is a very slippery slope regulating colors, and other specifics as part of the approval process because it is potentially legally indefensible.

Kent Hinckley said he talked with a neighbor that recently moved to Farmington from California. He asked her perception on Farmington Rock. She said she liked that the rock was often used in the buildings around the City. He reiterated that the general perception is often one that Farmington has rock in its architecture. **Roger Child** said that 100 years ago rock was used out of necessity on buildings. He said those buildings were significantly smaller in scale than what is often built now. He feels to

require Farmington Rock now, due to the scarcity of the rock, many developers may use an imitation rock, which has the potential to look very bad. **Alex Leeman** said he likes the idea that smaller buildings include Farmington Rock.

Connie Deianni suggested that since the standard requires an “element of Farmington Rock,” that a rock monument sign be required in front of larger buildings. She said it could be a unifying look within the City since it may not be realistic to require all buildings to include Farmington Rock. She also agreed that requiring Farmington Rock on the façade of a larger building does not make much of an impact. **Alex Leeman** said he likes the idea of rock monument signs. He said he imagines it being similar to a college campus in that many of the buildings are designed differently, but each building has a uniform sign tying the buildings all together.

David Petersen referenced a book titled *The Image of the City* by Kevin A. Lynch. He said most every city planner reads the book. He said the book covers a landmark study that took place in Boston in the 1960s. The author asked residents to draw Boston to scale to show how much matched reality. The study showed that people drew what they knew. He suggested considering looking at parcels that have road frontage. He said one example are the two remaining parcels in the BP zone, both of which have road frontage. He suggested ensuring those parcels look compatible. He said Shepard Lane has a wide mix, so he is unsure what can be done there. He said if the UDA plan for the mixed-use business park be followed, that area should remain compatible. Station Park is another example of a compatible feel within the City.

David Petersen pointed out that the one element that is the most unifying within the City, but is often overlooked, is the tree line on Main St. and State St. **Alex Leeman** agreed; he asked why there is so much focus on Farmington Rock when the City could be requiring park strip trees everywhere within the City. He feels if the City were to choose a theme to mandate, he would be in favor of focusing on trees.

Roger Child referenced the Thomas Arts building. He said the building is a classic, yet high end look; however, he feels due to the window line and size, they would have a difficult time finding tenants. He said rock facades often dictate a smaller window size, which is problematic in leasing a building. He feels the Thomas Arts building still works because it is smaller scale and owner occupied; however, it would not work on a larger scale building. He feels if the requirement for Farmington Rock is maintained, it should be required on smaller, owner occupied buildings found in the historic district, or that an element be included in the landscape of the building. He feels if this is the case, it should be clarified if a boulder classifies as an element in the landscaping.

Heather Barnum asked the commissioners who is in favor of amending the Ordinance. After a brief discussion, the majority of the commissioners were in favor of modifying the Ordinance with additional provisions.

Heather Barnum then asked the commissioners for three to four points that stuck out over the discussion that they would like to consider when amending the Ordinance. The following points were discussed:

- Maintaining a “rock element” within the ordinance, which could be included in the building, the landscaping, or signage (all 6 of the commissioners were in favor of this point);
- Considering the scale of a building, and if it is street facing, which could include a higher percentage of rock requirement for a smaller scale building (4 of the 6 commissioners were in favor of this point);

- Determining cultural, unifying, or historical elements, specifically within architectural styles, in the City (2 of the 6 commissioners were in favor of this point);
- Requiring tree strip requirements on all street frontages (3 of the 6 commissioners were in favor of this point); and
- Applying the amended requirements to multi-family residential units (5 of the 6 commissioners were in favor of this point).

The following were points discussed, but supported by the listed commissioner:

- **Roger Child** supported amending the requirement for specific zones, or more specifically to main street entry ways into the City and to historic downtown;
- **Alex Leeman** supported removing the Farmington Rock requirement all together and requiring trees instead; and
- **Heather Barnum** supported gathering 3-4 building materials that could maintain the cultural integrity of the City, which could also include approved synthetic materials.

David Petersen said staff will take the points discussed, and will bring more information regarding potential changes to the Ordinance at the November 2, 2017 Planning Commission meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

At 8:25 p.m., **Alex Leeman** made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was unanimously approved.



Heather Barnum
Chair, Farmington City Planning Commission